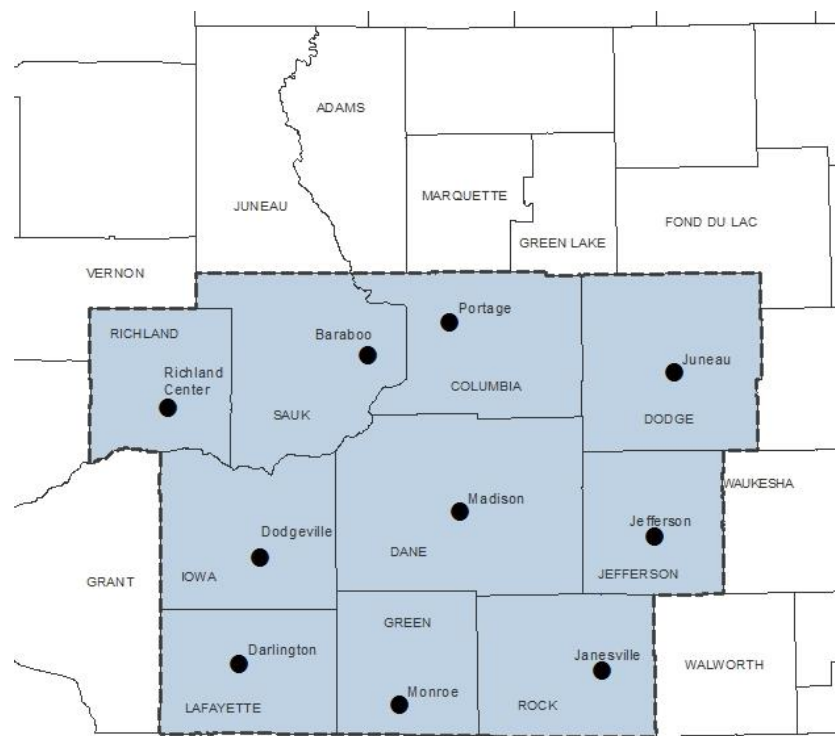


Recreation Opportunities Analysis



SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION



8. SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION

Background

LANDSCAPE SETTING

The Southern Gateways Region is in the south-central part of the state and encompasses Columbia, Dane, Dodge, Green, Iowa, Jefferson, Lafayette, Richland, Rock and Sauk Counties. From the rolling green hills of the southern portions of the region, to the centrally-located Wisconsin River and the marshy areas of eastern portions, this region contains a variety of environments, the combination of which provide a wide array of recreational opportunities. The Southern Gateways also has several important geologic features. Devil's Lake State Park, a craggy glacial lake surrounded by high cliffs and scenic overlooks, is one of the most popular recreation areas in the region. The Baraboo Hills, located in one of the few areas of the state that remained unglaciated in the past Ice Age, is a spectacular geologic resource with many unique rock formations, cliffs, waterfalls, and a high diversity of plant and animal species. The Madison urban center affects much of the Southern Gateways Region. Rapid suburban development within the greater Madison metropolitan area has made areas of Dane County among the fastest growing in the state. As urban populations increase, so too does the demand for traditionally urban-based recreation such as dog parks and developed sports facilities.

The rolling green hills of the southern and western areas of the region are characteristic of the landscape's deeply dissected, unglaciated topography with broad open hilltops, flat fertile river valleys, and steep wooded slopes. Prairies and savannas were the dominant habitat types in this area prior to Euro-American settlement. The dominant land use now is agriculture, although farms typically contain a combination of row crops, hay fields, and small woodlots. Given its proximity to Madison, Rockford, Dubuque and even Chicago, the area is experiencing rapid changes as former farms are split up into housing for commuters and recreation land for people that live outside the area.

The northern side of the region is home to the Central Sand Hills landscape. There are a number of productive fishing lakes and cold-water streams on the edge of the old Glacial Lake Wisconsin. Many rare species inhabit the coastal plain marshes in this area, which are a rare natural community type.

In contrast to the highly unglaciated western and southern areas of the region, the eastern half of the Southern Gateways Region is home to some of the world's best examples of continental glacial activity. Drumlins, eskers, kettle lakes, kames, ground and end moraines, and other glacial features are evident throughout the entire area. Most notable lakes here include the Yahara Chain of Lakes and Lake Koshkonong. Additionally, the largest single wetland in this landscape, Horicon Marsh, is a globally significant area. More fens also occur here than in any other part of North America.

Several high-quality warm and cold-water streams flow throughout the landscape and support diverse fisheries and some rare aquatic species. Large, meandering rivers and their associated floodplain forests are often managed for oak-hardwood production. Many of the region's lakes have extremely productive fisheries that draw anglers from throughout the Midwest.

LOCAL ECONOMY

The major land cover in the Southern Gateways Region is agricultural, occupying over 50% of the region's land. From dairy and beef farming in the western portion of the region to dairying and cash-cropping of grains and vegetables in the east, the influence of agriculture is prominent. Soils in the east are largely silt loams with areas of clay and sandy soils. Most of the tillable land is intensively farmed.

Top employment sectors of the regional economy include government, trade, transportation and utilities, professional and business services, education and medical services, manufacturing, and leisure and hospitality.

RECREATION USES AND PARTICIPATION

The Southern Gateways Region has the highest occurrence of Wisconsin State Park System properties within any region of the state. Yet, there is relatively little public land compared to other regions, and the handful of public properties receive heavy use. Recreation demand from residents and visitors is focused on sightseeing and other land based recreation activities such as camping and wildlife watching.

The rolling hills of the west and south harbor a range of opportunities for hiking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, camping, picnicking, wildlife watching, fishing, hunting, biking, paddling, nature studying, off-road biking and horseback riding. There are also some spring-fed, cold-water streams that support trout. These streams receive substantial use by anglers.

The recreational opportunities in the northern portion of the region reflect those of the rolling hills of the south and west. A stretch of the Wisconsin River from the Wisconsin Dells to Sauk City provides many opportunities for paddling, boating, and fishing. Lakes in the region provide some of the best and most popular inland lake fishing in the state.

Recreation participation rates for Wisconsin residents were presented on page 14 of the Introduction. Most of participation rates of Southern Gateways Region residents are consistent with the state average or within five percentage points in variation. Some of the more notable variations are in the box to the right.

Activities that residents of the Southern Gateways Region participate in at lower rates than the state average:

- Hunting big game
- Hunting small game
- Hunting turkey
- Riding ATV/UTV on trails/routes
- Riding motorcycles on trails/routes
- River fishing from boat/canoe/kayak
- Stream/river fishing from shore
- Target firearms

EXISTING RECREATION SUPPLY IN THE SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION

PUBLIC LANDS FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

The Southern Gateways Region has approximately 230,000 acres of public land available for outdoor recreation. The area has a number of small pockets of land with a variety of opportunities, surrounded by large urban centers. This section briefly describes the public conservation and recreation lands in the Southern Gateways Region. A description of all public lands in Wisconsin is provided in Appendix 3.

a) Federal

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service manages over 28,000 acres in the Southern Gateways area, with over 21,000 of those acres located in Dodge county. These properties function as areas for prairie habitat restoration, wildlife refuges, and waterfowl production. Horicon National Wildlife Refuge, located in Dodge county, is especially known for its popularity among waterfowl during the spring and fall migration.

The National Park Service owns and manages over 100 acres in Dane County as part of the Ice Age State and National Scenic Trail as it winds through southern Wisconsin. The Ice Age Trail spans the entire state of Wisconsin, stretching from Interstate Park on the Minnesota border to Potawatomi State Park on Lake Michigan.

b) State

The Department of Natural Resources owns over 200,000 acres in the Southern Gateways Region. State properties in the region span the range of intended recreational settings and development levels (Map B3). At one end of the spectrum are properties such as Devil's Lake, Governor Dodge and Governor Nelson State Parks that include developed campgrounds, miles of trails, boating opportunities and picnic sites. Devil's Lake State Park is the most visited property in the state, attracting over 2.5 million people annually. At the other end of the spectrum are properties like McGilvra Woods State Natural Area, a small sugar maple forest lying deep in the Baraboo Hills. The property is home to wonderfully rich display of spring wildflowers and colorful forest birds. Although these types of properties can provide some limited recreation opportunities for low-impact activities such as hunting, bird watching

and nature study, their primary purpose is not necessarily to provide recreation opportunities requiring development or infrastructure.

c) County

The Southern Gateways Region has an array of county park properties that provide campgrounds, boat launches, several types of trails, dog parks, and other types of recreational opportunities. For example, the Dane County Parks Department manages over 12,000 acres of land with bike, horse and cross-country ski trails, segments of the Ice Age Trail, campgrounds and other specialty recreation and natural areas.

d) Other

Many cities, villages, and townships in the Southern Gateways Region own and manage parks, boat access sites, and other properties that provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. Given their easy proximity to many citizens and scenic views, these properties are very well-used. In addition, several school properties the region are open to some forms of recreation, generally when they are not in use by school and community groups.

PRIVATE LANDS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION

This section summarizes the privately-owned lands in the region that are open to the public for some types of recreation. A detailed description of private lands in Wisconsin open to the public is provided in Appendix 3.

a) Managed Forest Law (MFL) and Forest Crop Law enrolled lands

The amount of land enrolled in these forestry programs in this region is largely concentrated in Richland and Sauk counties. A total of over 5,000 acres in the Southern Gateways Region are currently enrolled in these programs. Because these programs use 25 or 50-year contracts, the total amount enrolled changes from year to year as landowners enroll lands into the program (only the MFL program is open to enrollment) and contracts covering other lands expire. MFL-closed land is not open for public use.

b) Land trusts

The following land trusts operate in the Southern Gateways Region: Baraboo Range Preservation Association, Groundswell Conservancy, Ice Age Trail Alliance, Madison Audubon Society, Stewards of the Dells of the Wisconsin River, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Friends of Pheasant Branch, Drumlin Area Land Trust, Land Trust Network, Driftless Area Land Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy and Riverland Conservancy. These non-profit conservation organizations have protected over 12,000 acres in the region. Most of these lands are open to the public for some forms of recreation such as hunting, fishing, hiking, wildlife watching, snowshoeing and other similar activities.

c) Voluntary Public Access Program

The DNR Voluntary Public Access and Habitat Incentive Program provides financial incentives to private landowners who open their property to public hunting, fishing, trapping and wildlife observation. Funding was authorized in the 2008 and 2014 Farm Bills. Funds from 2014 are administered and provided by U.S. Department of Agriculture-NRCS. To date, there are over 13,000 acres available in the Southern Gateways Region, primarily located in Rock county.

d) Snowmobile Trails on Private Lands

The state snowmobile trail network has been developed through the work of local clubs partnering with private landowners. Agreements with willing landowners allow trails to be located for the winter season, which enables snowmobilers to travel throughout the network. There are 2,715 miles of snowmobile trail in the Southern Gateways region, of which 92% (2,496 miles) on are private lands.

EXISTING PUBLIC RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The department contacted representatives from county governments and regional organizations to gather information about the recreation opportunities available to the public across the Southern Gateways Region. In addition, department staff

searched websites for additional data and descriptions of the recreation opportunities provided. Maps C and D show existing recreation infrastructure in the ten counties of the region.

The Southern Gateways Region contains many public lands, notably sixteen state parks, several state fish and wildlife management properties, and two federal properties. There are also several county and municipal facilities too numerous to list here. These properties provide a wide range of high-quality recreation opportunities. What follows are a few examples of infrastructure in the Southern Gateways Region that support a variety of recreation activities.

a) Horicon National Wildlife Refuge

- Wildlife observation and photography
- Hiking and bicycling
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing
- Deer and upland game hunting
- Fishing
- Guided tours and educational programs

b) Ice Age Trail

- Meanders over 1,000 miles across the state
- Backpacking trail for sightseeing, wildlife viewing and bird watching
- Snowshoeing and cross-country skiing opportunities

c) Devil's Lake State Park

- 29 miles of hiking trails
- 5 miles of off-road bike trails
- Rock climbing
- Family camping
- Playground and picnic areas
- Boat landings for boating (electric motors only), canoeing and kayaking opportunities
- Swimming and scuba diving opportunities
- Hunting, trapping and fishing opportunities
- A variety of wintertime activities –ice fishing, snowmobiling, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and dog sledding

d) Governor Dodge State Park

- 40 miles of hiking trails
- 8 miles of off-road bicycle trails
- 22 miles of equestrian trails for horseback riding and camping
- Swimming, boating (electric motors only), canoeing and kayaking opportunities
- Hunting, trapping and fishing opportunities
- Playground and picnic areas
- Family camping
- Sledding hill, snowmobiling, winter hiking, snowshoeing, ice fishing and cross-country skiing

e) Aztalan State Park

- Premier archaeological site and National Landmark
- Hiking, snowmobiling and snowshoeing opportunities
- Boating, canoeing and kayaking in the Crawfish River
- Picnic area
- Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities

f) Yellowstone Lake State Park

- Over 13 miles of hiking trails
- Two boat launch ramps for boats, kayaks, canoes, sailboats and other personal watercraft
- A swimming beach and bathhouse
- Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities
- Snowmobile and cross-country ski trails
- Four miles of off-road biking trails

g) State Trails

- Over 150 miles of multi-use, off-road trails
- Badger State Trail connects Madison to the Wisconsin-Illinois border
- ATV opportunities on the Badger and Pecatonica State Trails
- Cross-country skiing, snowshoeing and snowmobiling options
- Walking, bicycling, and in-line skating opportunities
- Camping options at nearby state campgrounds
- Hunting opportunities on Glacial Drumlin State Trail

h) State Wildlife, Fishery and Natural Areas

- Hunting, fishing and trapping opportunities
- Hiking, nature study, photography, wildlife watching opportunities

PUBLIC INPUT ON RECREATION NEEDS IN THE SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE ROA.

The department hosted four public open house meetings, in Baraboo, Horicon, Milwaukee, and Fitchburg between December 5th and 13th, 2017. These open houses were designed to both present information about the ROA and to gather public input on the types of recreation activities they pursued, what places they liked to visit (including what attributes drew them to these properties), and what additional opportunities they wished were available in the Southern Gateways Region.

In addition to these open houses, the department posted an online public input form to its web page. A downloadable version was also available for people who preferred to print, fill out, and send in the form. The public input period ran from November 15, 2017 to January 2, 2018. The department sent out information and press releases about the ROA project and encouraged people to share their perspectives through the online or hardcopy public input forms. Recreation groups, non-profit organizations, and others distributed links to the input form to their members.¹

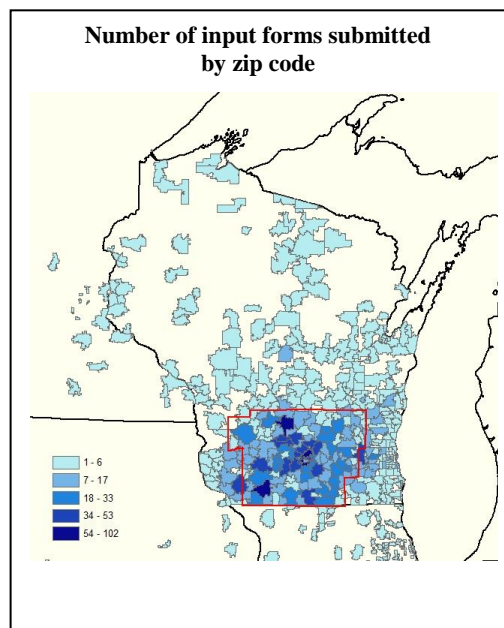
The department received comments in the following formats:

- 3,638 online public input forms
- 151 paper copies of the public input form
- 3 letters and emails

It is important for readers to keep in mind that the public input received through the ROA process is simply information gathered at one point in time, using an open-access technique. It is not a representation of what the “average” resident believes or the range of perspectives that exist.

¹ The public input form was available for anyone to complete and over 3,700 people did so. The department’s experience is that when it provides “open access” opportunities in which anyone can participate, the people that respond tend to be those that find out about the input opportunity and to have a particular or active interest in a specific issue; that is, they care enough about an issue to take the time to find and fill out the form or write an email or letter. The responses received are valuable in providing the department with an understanding of people’s perspectives, reasoning and breadth of viewpoints. However, because there is no “defined population” from which these responses originate, from a statistical perspective there is no way to know how the respondents compare to a larger population (for example, how the 3,700+ respondents compare to the population of the ten-county region or the state as a whole) and therefore no way that the results can be generalized with an associated error margin to a larger population.

Respondents were asked to list the zip code of their primary residence. Of those who provided this information, the map to the right shows their distribution and frequency. As can be seen, the primary residence of many people who provided input is within the ten-county Southern Gateways Region. Dane County (26%) was the most commonly identified county for this region. The remaining counties in the region each amounted to 1-7% of respondents. Overall, the 10 counties in the region amounted to a total of over 64% of the respondents to the questionnaire.



The occurrence of state and local parks in the Southern Gateways Region is quite high when compared to other regions of the state. The Baraboo Hills mountain range provide remarkable views and is home to the state's most popular park, Devil's Lake State Park. Bisected by the Wisconsin River, another popular recreation resource, the southern part of the region provides rolling hills and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. The department received comments, perspectives and ideas on the following topics.

Participation in outdoor recreation

Respondents to the public input form participate in many outdoor recreation activities. Popular activities that were selected by respondents are seen in the table at right. We can compare these results to the participation results from the recent Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) survey. The **bolded** activities in the table at right were the most popular activities that the SCORP survey indicated residents in the Southern Gateways Region participate in. What is notable here is that popular activities noted the ROA public input opportunity appear to be significantly different from the random sample of the Southern Gateways generated by the SCORP survey.

Popular recreation activities in which respondents to the ROA input form participate

ATV/UTV Riding
 Bicycling – mountain biking, single track
Bicycling on surfaced trails
 Camping – tent
 Canoeing/kayaking
 Cross-country skiing/snowshoeing
 Fishing – from a boat, canoe, or kayak
 Fishing – from shore
Hiking, walking, running on trails
 Hunting – big game (deer, bear)
Swimming
 Snowmobiling

Properties that people visit

A small percentage of the Southern Gateways Region is in public ownership, totaling around 230,000 acres. The most popular parks among respondents are Devil's Lake State Park, Governor Dodge State Park, and Blue Mound State Park. The Ice Age Trail, Glacial Drumlin State Trail and Military Ridge State Trail also offer popular recreational activities. On a county level, Dane County Parks comprise the sixth most popular destinations in the Southern Gateways Region.

Hiking, walking, and running on trails and canoeing/kayaking are the most popular activities participate in at Devil's Lake and Governor Dodge State Parks. This reflects the top recreational activities noted in the region, which are similarly hiking, walking and running on trails as well as canoeing/kayaking.

Factors important in determining favorite places to visit

Of survey respondents, the majority (65%) selected 1) the quality of trails as the top factor in determining their favorite property to visit. Like other regions, this aligns with high participation and demand for trail activities. The next most

important factors are 2) the desire to be in a quiet place, 3) good maps, signs or information about the property, and 4) the quality of the habitat.

Additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed

About 73% of respondents believe that more recreational opportunities are needed in the Southern Gateways Region. The opportunity that was most frequently selected as needed in the Southern Gateways was more trails for motorized recreation, following by more hiking, walking and running trails.

The recent SCORP survey of statewide residents found a correlation between the activities that people pursue and their perspectives on what additional opportunities are needed in their home county. For many activities, participants generally believed there was a need for more opportunities. The public input received as part of the ROA showed a similar pattern in the Southern Gateways Region. For example, among participants in ATV/UTV riding and off-road motorcycling, 73% and 76%, respectively, indicated a need for more trails for motorized recreation. Similarly, an assessment of those who hike, walk and run reveals the most commonly cited need as that of more hiking, walking and running trails.

Top 10 most frequently identified recreation opportunities needed in the Southern Gateways Region, based on public input gathered during the ROA process

Activity	# of responses
More trails for motorized recreation (ATVs, UTVs, off-road motorcycles, etc.)	1182
More hiking/walking/running trails	1001
More natural surface (dirt) bicycling trails	724
More paved bicycling trails	676
More rustic/quiet campgrounds (pit toilets, no electricity or generators)	618
More public shore access to lakes & streams	618
More developed campgrounds (electric hook-ups, flush toilets, showers)	489
More local parks and playgrounds	405
More horse trails	401
More public shooting ranges	399

Department-managed roads and motorized access

Over 380 miles of roads exist on department properties in the Southern Gateways Region. These roads are used primarily for management purposes, including primitive seasonal logging roads, natural resource management or other property service activities. About one-third (120 miles) of these roads are part of the property transportation network and open to the public at least part of the year to drive “street-legal vehicles” (this includes cars, pick-up trucks, SUVs, motorcycles and other licensed vehicles). By state law, these roads are also open to horses, horse-drawn vehicles and bicycles.

The department sought public feedback on potentially opening none, some, or all department roads that are currently open to “street-legal” vehicles in the Southern Gateways Region to motorized recreation vehicles.² About 56% of respondents to the survey believe that DNR roads should be open for at least some purposes. Of those that believe DNR roads should be open for some purposes, most support some roads being opened to in order to connect regional motorized trail networks, whereas under a third support some roads being opened to provide access during the fall hunting seasons. Additionally, 29% of respondents indicated a desire to keep roads closed year-round, and 26% desired to have all the roads open year-round.

² For purposes of the ROA, “recreational vehicles” includes off highway vehicles, ATVs, UTVs and off highway motorcycles.

INPUT GATHERED AS PART OF THE WISCONSIN SCORP.

In 2016 as part of the development of the SCORP, the department asked a random sample of Wisconsin residents to identify additional outdoor recreation opportunities needed in their home county. The most frequently identified needs statewide were:

- hiking/walking/running trails
- bicycling trails
- public shore access to lakes, rivers and streams
- public shooting ranges
- public campsites
- local parks and playgrounds

Respondents living in the ten counties in the Southern Gateways Region identified the following needs, among others, at **a higher** rate than the state average:

- bicycling trails
- hiking/walking/running trails
- local parks and playgrounds
- outdoor courts and playing fields

Southern Gateways residents identified the following needs, among others, **less frequently** than the state average:

- hunting opportunities
- public boat launches
- trails for motorized recreation

FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION

The Southern Gateways Region faces challenges to balance the growth of recreational demand alongside the regional population growth. There is a high demand for many varying types of outdoor recreation, but a limited amount of public land to recreate on. This high demand places pressure on limited resources that land managers are tasked to protect. Although there are many small pockets of land with existing recreational opportunities, the largest demand for recreational growth is with trails for motorized recreational and trails for hiking, walking and running. In some cases, these activities may be viewed as competing for the same resources. In other cases, the desired resources may be very different. In the end, many of these recreation demands will likely require partnerships to address fully. Some of these partnerships could include those with federal, state and local governments, user groups, property owners, as well as other organizations. The department has, for years, been involved in different types of partnerships and will continue to partner with others to provide southern Wisconsin high-quality outdoor recreation experiences.

The department used the following sources to identify which recreation opportunities are most needed in the region:

- Public input on recreation needs submitted during the comment period (November 15, 2017 to January 2, 2018).
- Data on recreation participation and needs gathered in a 2016 survey as part of the development of the 2017-2022 SCORP.
- Data gathered in previous SCORP planning efforts.

From this information, department staff grouped the relative needs for recreation activities as high, medium or low. The groupings are as follows:

Future recreation needs in the Southern Gateways Region – High	Future recreation needs in the Southern Gateways Region – Medium	Future recreation needs in the Southern Gateways Region – Low
ATV/UTV riding Bicycling – bicycle touring/road riding Bicycling – mountain biking/off-road biking Bird or wildlife watching Camping – developed Camping – primitive Canoeing or kayaking Fishing – lake fishing from shore or a pier Gather mushrooms, berries, etc. Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft) Picnicking Snowshoeing Swimming in lakes and rivers	Bicycling – fat tire/snow biking Cross country skiing Dog walking Fishing – ice fishing Fishing – lake fishing from a boat, canoe or kayak Fishing – river fishing from a boat, canoe or kayak Fishing – stream/river fishing from shore or wading Four-wheel vehicle driving Geocaching Horseback riding Hunting – big game Hunting – turkey Nature photography Off-highway motorcycle riding Participating in nature-based education programs Rock climbing Snowmobiling Target shooting – archery Target shooting – firearms Visiting a beach, beach walking	Dog sledding/skijoring Dog training Dog trialing Horse cart driving Hunting – migratory birds Hunting – small game Sailing, windsurfing, rowing, stand-up paddling Scuba diving/snorkeling Trapping Whitewater rafting

OPPORTUNITIES TO MEET FUTURE RECREATION NEEDS IN THE SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION ON DEPARTMENT-MANAGED LANDS

On behalf of Wisconsin residents, the department owns and manages properties in the Southern Gateways Region to meet a variety of ecological and recreation goals. These properties span a diversity of landscapes; from the unglaciated, rolling hills of the west to the marshes of the east, a variety of recreation opportunities are available. At the same time, these properties face heavy demand from the region's urban areas.

Applying the regional needs listed above, the department evaluated the properties it manages in the Southern Gateways Region to identify places where it could potentially incorporate some activities or enhance existing opportunities to meet these needs. The identification of department-managed lands that appear to be “good fits” to provide different activities will be used to help focus the department's work developing and updating property master plans. A description of opportunities to meet recreation needs in the Southern Gateways Region (on department-managed lands) follows.

MOTORIZED TRAIL RECREATION

Based on public input received during the development of the Southern Gateways region chapter, there appears to be diverse opinions on the desirability of providing more ATV/UTV access. While many people support providing some access for motorized recreational vehicles, there is also vocal opposition to this use. The department recognizes that motorized recreational uses, particularly those that occur in warm-weather months, are a contentious issue.

Motorized trail recreation is rapidly growing in demand across the Southern Gateways region in part due to the number of local residents who own recreation vehicles. However, public land available for this use is quite limited. While there are many state-owned properties here, most are constrained by the amount of acreage available for trail development and many are isolated from each other. As opposed to the large contiguous blocks of national, state and county forest lands in the north, the landscape in this region is dominated by private agricultural lands. This makes it difficult to plan a trail network located on department properties. As a result, much of the ATV/UTV access in this region is on local road routes.

Many of the properties in this region also receive high visitation rates. Devil's Lake State Park, for example, is the most popular park in the state and rivals visitation at many national parks in the western United States. The amount of impact to the property through high usage levels is a concern to the department and adding more uses could place additional stress on the property. In addition, the high demand for the existing recreational uses currently at department properties in this area may be disrupted by adding motorized trail recreation.

With the growing number of ATV/UTVs, off-highway motorcycles and four-wheel drive vehicles, the need for a place to recreate with them is growing. The department has been aware of this need and began efforts in the mid-2000's to search for a property that could best accommodate motorized recreation in southern Wisconsin. Termed the motorized recreation area (MRA), this property would be home to multiple types of off-road motorized recreation, including ATV/UTVs, motorcycles and four-wheel-drive vehicles. The department has investigated several locations for the MRA, however attempts to purchase property have been unsuccessful up to this point. The department remains committed to working with motorized recreation partners to develop the MRA when appropriate lands become available.

Cooperatively Managed Trails

It should be noted that the department owns several state trails in the region. However, some of these trails are cooperatively managed by local governments, usually counties. In these partnerships, the department typically holds the land ownership while the partners develop, maintain and operate the trail. Also, the managing partner conducts planning processes to determine which recreational uses will be allowed on the property. Since use decisions are planned by the trail partners, cooperatively managed trails will not be listed below as potential "good fits" in this analysis. However, the information collected will be provided to the partners for their use in future planning efforts.

For the Southern Gateways Region, cooperatively managed trails include:

- Pecatonica State Trail
- Great Sauk State Trail

NON-MOTORIZED TRAIL RECREATION

Non-motorized trail recreation has been and continues to be a primary outdoor activity throughout the year in the Southern Gateways Region. From hiking the Ice Age Trail and biking the Military Ridge State Trail in the summer to snowshoeing at the state parks in the winter, the region's residents and visitors take advantage of the numerous opportunities that currently exist.

As opposed to recreational bicycle touring, where there are benefits to creating multiple connecting linkages, meeting the growing need for mountain biking and off-road biking opportunities can be created or expanded at multiple, stand-alone sites throughout the region. The driftless area in the western portion of this region provides excellent challenge for expert riders and plethora of opportunity for beginners.

Hiking, walking, and running on trails in the region remains very popular activities and top the list of activities with the most participants in the region. Many opportunities currently exist on department properties throughout the region. Additional trails near population centers, such as the Madison area, are likely to be most frequently used.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for non-motorized trail activities:

Recreation Activity	Activity currently exists at the property; there are opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently exists at the property; there are only limited opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are opportunities to add this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are only limited opportunities to add this use
Bicycling - bicycle touring/ road riding	Devil's Lake and New Glarus Woods State Parks Badger State Trail Horicon, Mud Lake, Shaw Marsh and Waterloo State Wildlife Areas	Governor Dodge, Mirror Lake, and Blue Mound State Parks Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area 400, Glacial Drumlin, Military Ridge and Sugar River State Trails Lower Wisconsin State Riverway	Natural Bridge and Governor Nelson State Parks Cadiz Springs State Recreation Area	Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area Dell Creek and Yellowstone State Wildlife Areas
Bicycling - mountain biking/off-road biking	Devil's Lake, New Glarus Woods and Yellowstone Lake State Parks Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Badger State Trail	Blue Mound, Governor Dodge and Mirror Lake State Parks 400, Glacial Drumlin, Military Ridge and Sugar River State Trails Lake Mills State Wildlife Area	Belmont Mound and Natural Bridge State Parks Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Baraboo Hills and Cadiz Springs State Recreation Areas Jefferson Marsh, Koshkonong, and Rome Pond State Wildlife Areas	Dell Creek, Swan Lake and Yellowstone Wildlife Areas
Hiking, walking, trail running, backpacking	All department properties are open to hiking, although most fishery, wildlife and natural areas do not have designated trails. Designated trails are found on state park, trail, forest, and flowage properties. Nearly all department properties have opportunities to add at least some designated hiking/ running/backpacking trails.			
Snowshoeing	All department properties are open to snowshoeing, regardless if department properties have designated trails or not. Snowshoe use on groomed cross-country ski trails is usually not allowed.			

WATER RELATED RECREATION

In addition to trail-based activities, the variety of lakes and waterways in the Southern Gateways Region provide opportunities for water-related recreation, such as swimming, fishing, motorboating, and canoeing or kayaking.

There are many existing boat launches as well as state ownership frontage to these waterways. Depending on the waterway, foot access for fishing may be sufficient. In other cases, primitive canoe access or developed boat landings may be what is needed for additional access.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for water related recreation:

Recreation Activity	
Canoeing or kayaking	<p>Although not every property with open water has formal boat access sites (or access sites on all waterbodies) many of the lakes, rivers, and larger streams on department-managed lands have some opportunities to carry in a canoe or kayak. The following properties may have the potential to add more or better develop walk-in trails to access waterbodies with canoes or kayaks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Badfish Creek Wildlife Area Devil's Lake State Park Jefferson Marsh State Wildlife and Natural Area Lake Mills Wildlife Area Mud Lake Wildlife Area Rome Pond Wildlife Area Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Waterloo Wildlife Area
Fishing - lake fishing from shore or a pier	<p>All department lands with lakes are open to shore fishing and as such there are not significant opportunities to expand this opportunity. There are some fishing docks or piers on department lands and there are some opportunities to add new ones, particularly at those properties near cities and villages and with easy road access. The following properties may be able to improve opportunities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devil's Lake State Park Governor Dodge State Park Horicon Wildlife Area Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Mud Lake Wildlife Area Rome Pond Wildlife Area Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Waterloo Wildlife Area
Motorboating (waterski/tubing, personal watercraft)	<p>The department currently maintains improved boat launches throughout the region. In some cases, these opportunities are on small lakes, many of which have slow-no wake protections in effect. Any new opportunities for higher speed boating would be dependent on these resource protection measures. The properties with potential to add more improved boat access sites (ramps for trailered boats) include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Horicon Wildlife Area Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Mud Lake Wildlife Area Waterloo Wildlife Area
Swimming in lakes and rivers	<p>All department properties adjacent to public waters allow swimming. Many state parks and forests have beaches, changing rooms and other amenities to accommodate swimming. There may be opportunities to create or expand existing swimming opportunities at the following properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devil's Lake State Park Horicon Wildlife Area Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Mud Lake Wildlife Area Waterloo Wildlife Area

OTHER FORMS OF RECREATION

There are also a number of other types of outdoor recreation in demand within the Southern Gateways Region, including camping, picnicking, gathering edibles and wildlife watching.

Camping, both primitive and developed, is growing in popularity in the area, especially over summer months. Proximity to the Madison area harbors a large population of outdoor enthusiasts looking for a reprieve from the city. Additionally, places to go for the day and picnic, or simply going for a walk to experience wildlife are popular in the region.

The following table lists current and potential future opportunities for other forms of recreation:

Recreation Activity	Activity currently exists at the property; there are opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently exists at the property; there are only limited opportunities to expand this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are opportunities to add this use	Activity currently does not exist at the property; there are only limited opportunities to add this use
Camping – developed (modern)	Blue Mound, Devil's Lake, Governor Dodge, and New Glarus Woods and Yellowstone Lake State Parks Glacial Drumlin State Trail	Mirror Lake State Park	Lower Wisconsin State Riverway Cadiz Springs, Capital Springs and Sauk Prairie State Recreation Areas Goose Lake Wildlife Area	Baraboo Hills Recreation Area Badger and Sugar River State Trails Dell Creek Wildlife Area
Camping – primitive (rustic)	Devil's Lake, Governor Dodge, Mirror Lake, New Glarus Woods and Yellowstone Lake State Parks Badger and Glacial Drumlin State Trails Lower Wisconsin State Riverway	Blue Mound State Park Lodi Marsh Wildlife Area	Natural Bridge State Park Baraboo Hills, Cadiz Springs, Capital Springs and Sauk Prairie State Recreation Areas State Ice Age Trail Areas Dell Creek and Goose Lake Wildlife Areas	400 and Sugar River State Trails Pine Island and Swan Lake Wildlife Areas
Picnicking	Aztalan, Belmont Mound, Lake Kegonsa, Mirror Lake, New Glarus Woods and Yellowstone Lake State Parks Sauk Prairie, Cadiz Springs, and Capital Springs State Recreation Areas Badger and Glacial Drumlin State Trails State Ice Age Trail Areas Shaw Marsh and Yellowstone Wildlife Areas	Blue Mound State Park Pine Island Wildlife Area	Baraboo Hills State Recreation Area Albany, Avon Bottoms, Evansville, Jefferson Marsh, Koshkonong, Lake Mills, Liberty Creek, Lima Marsh – Storrs Lake and Rome Pond State Wildlife Areas	Dell Creek Wildlife Area
Bird and wildlife watching	All department properties are open to bird and wildlife watching. Trails are sometimes desired but not necessary. In some cases, properties may be able to add viewing platforms that would provide better vantage points from which to view wildlife. Nearly all department properties have opportunities to add at least some designated hiking trails or viewing platforms that would aid this activity.			
Gather mushrooms, berries, etc.	All department properties are open to gathering edibles. Depending on what the fruit or mushroom sought, some properties may be preferred over others. Generally, no infrastructure is needed or desired for harvesting. Some products found on state properties are not allowed to be harvested without permission.			

SUMMARY OF THE SOUTHERN GATEWAYS REGION ROA

With smaller, diverse pockets of public lands, the Southern Gateways Region has been home to a wide range of recreational opportunities. Demand for both motorized and non-motorized trails opportunities is prominent in the area; the top needs included: trails for motorized recreation, hiking/walking/running trails, natural surface and paved bicycling trails, rustic camping and public shore access.

The department believes there are opportunities to meet many of the desired recreational experiences on some of the properties it manages in the Southern Gateways Region. In general, the department believes the following property groups are well-suited to provide the identified needs in the region:

STATE PARKS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths. Properties in proximity to cities and villages likely would be most popular.
- Surfaced bicycle trails that expand the existing network linking cities and villages and campgrounds.
- Mountain biking to expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could be single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (potentially including skills areas).
- Canoeing/kayaking with improved walk-in trails and access to waterbodies.
- Lake fishing from shore or pier, by adding improved boat access sites such as ramps for trailered boats.
- Swimming in lakes and rivers that are accommodated by beaches, changing rooms and other amenities.
- Primitive camping to allow visitors to take a break from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

STATE TRAILS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths. Properties in proximity to cities and villages likely would be most popular.
- Surfaced bicycle trails that expand the existing network linking cities and villages and campgrounds.
- Mountain biking to expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These properties typically will not be able to accommodate single-track trails.
- Developed camping, including adding electrified sites to significant portions of campgrounds.
- Primitive camping to allow visitors to take a break on their trail adventures.

STATE RECREATION AREAS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- A future motorized recreation area is being sought to accommodate various motorized recreation, including ATV/UTV riding, off-highway motorcycling and four-wheel drive vehicle riding.
- Surfaced bicycle trails that expand the existing network linking cities and villages and campgrounds.
- Mountain biking to expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Canoeing/kayaking with improved walk-in trails and access to waterbodies.
- Improved boat access sites such as ramps for trailered boats for motorboating and lake fishing.
- Primitive camping to allow visitors to get away from the developed campground setting.

STATE WILDLIFE AREAS

- Hiking/walking/running loop trails of varying lengths.
- Surfaced bicycle trails that expand the existing network linking cities and villages and campgrounds.
- Mountain biking to expand existing opportunities and create new destinations. These trails could provide single-track, constructed trails of varying difficulties (including potentially skills areas).
- Canoeing/kayaking with improved walk-in trails and access to waterbodies.
- Improved boat access sites such as ramps for trailered boats for motorboating and lake fishing.
- Swimming in lakes and rivers that are accommodated by beaches, changing rooms and other amenities.
- Primitive camping to allow visitors to make hunting and fishing trips more adventurous.

